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# Weather, Weathering, Weathered: Editors' Notebook

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*Weather, Weathering, Weathered:  
Editors' Notebook*



Jana Kutarna, *The Heart is a Mussel*. Eastern Shore, Nova Scotia.

**N**ASA recently published a visual model depicting the varying concentrations of airborne particles—or aerosols—present around the earth on August 23, 2018 (“Just Another Day”). The Goddard Earth Observing System Forward Processing (GEOS FP) model measured airborne sea salt, dust, and black carbon particles in blue, purple, and red, and mapped elevated concentrations of those aerosols onto a darkened image of the earth as seen from space. The

image, with its massive swirls of vibrant colour, quickly began to make the rounds in the news and on social media. And for good reason—it painted a picture of a world on fire.

The summer of 2018 saw much of North America gripped by both uncontrollable wildfires and punishing storms. Roughly 13,000 square kilometres burned in British Columbia, easily setting a new record for wildfire damage in a single season and surpassing the astonishing record set only last year (Lindsay). In the Carolinas, Hurricane Florence wreaked havoc, with powerful winds and record levels of rainfall and flooding (Murdoch). As extreme weather records pile up all over the world and human and nonhuman lives are lived on charred earth and flooded land, images like the GEOS FP model help us not only to understand our new environmental realities but also to undeniably link extreme weather events to climate change in the face of widespread corporate and political denialism.

While climate and weather models provide us with new and important tools for visualizing our changing environments, images of the world on fire and forecasting tools that map the destructive paths of massive oceanic storms leave out the complexities and sorrows of human and nonhuman lives lived in increasingly unliveable landscapes. One of the long-held goals of the environmental humanities in general and *The Goose* in particular is to provide scholars, writers, artists, and activists a forum in which to explore all that is left out of environmental communication, discourses, and genres that privilege dominant scientific knowledge and methods. As such, Issue 17.1 of *The Goose: A Journal of Arts, Environment, and Culture in Canada* presents a themed cluster on weather, climate, and atmosphere that contains a range of artistic and scholarly approaches to the theme. Cognizant that these are not the only pressing environmental issues that require creative and humanities-based responses, issue 17.1 also features a wealth of work that provides new perspectives on changing environments, including a forum on Jeffrey Eugenides’s novel *Middlesex*.

Our themed cluster on weather, climate, and atmosphere begins with a “Field Guide for Weathering” by Jennifer Mae Hamilton and Astrida Neimanis, with exercises for facilitating workshops on weathering, based on an understanding that weathering is something we are all doing, all the time, and that we can sense climate change and weather in our bodies. Alexandre Melay’s French-language article “Sonorités d’une méditation émotionnelle. Une esthétique de la pluie” explores an aesthetic of rain, especially in Japanese art and culture, as *Directeur du contenu francophone* Julien Defraeye explains:

L’article d’Alexandre Melay nous rappelle l’omniprésence de la pluie dans la culture japonaise, qui décline ses précipitations sous de nombreuses formes artistiques. Comme l’auteur le souligne, la pluie, loin des messages alarmants sur les catastrophes climatiques, est une métaphore de la vie invitant à l’introspection et à défier le temps.

Morgan Vanek’s article “Where the Weather Comes From” traces our dominant understandings and practices of weathering back to a shift toward empiricism that took place in the eighteenth century. In anxieties about weather from the same era, especially in a scene of exposure in Susanna Rowson’s 1794 novel *Charlotte Temple*, Vanek finds evidence that the weather has

always been a matter of social and environmental justice. Two very different nonfiction pieces by Anna Mullen and Christine Lowther resonate with each other to consider simple but vital acts of climate change witnessing from feminist perspectives. Mullen's "A Roof of One's Own: Widow Walking in the Anthropocene" merges memory and imagination to explore "widow's walks"—railed platforms typically built on the roofs of New England houses to provide unimpeded views of the sea—as sites of witness to rising sea levels. In "That was Then, This is Hell," Lowther's quick, choppy prose evokes the violent and changing waters around her float shack to consider complicity in and resistance to the colonialist and capitalist systems that have worked so hard to conceal the damage done to people and environments under their rule. "Cariboo Fires, 2017," a poetic and photographic collaboration by Susan McCaslin and Mark Haddock, remembers and records the aftermath of a forest fire. Poems by Elizabeth Miller, Rob B. Budde, Rina Garcia Chua, Yvonne E. Blomer, Catherine Oliver, and Sid Marty enrich the weather theme and explore different ways of weathering, including weathering forest fires.

We are also pleased to feature a special forum on Jeffrey Eugenides's *Middlesex*, edited by Kaitlin Blanchard and Catriona Sandilands, which began as two roundtables at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment's (ASLE) conference, "Rust/Resistance," in Detroit in June 2017. *Middlesex* is an intersex *bildungsroman*, set in Detroit, that provides a rich site in which to consider changing social, economic, and ecological environments. The *Middlesex* forum includes an introduction by Blanchard and Sandilands, and short essays by Christopher Breu, David Anderson, Elizabeth Mazzolini, Blanchard, Stacy Alaimo, Stephanie Hsu, Sandilands, Dai Kojima, Jenny Kerber, Julietta Singh, Laura Collins, and Nicole Seymour. The ecological, biopolitical, crip, materialist, critical race, and architectural readings of the novel are structured as a conversation between the contributors. Special thanks to *The Goose* copy editor David Anderson for all of his work on the forum.

In addition to our themed sections on *Middlesex* and weather, issue 17.1 has a robust general section. Beth Carruthers's essay "Returning the Radiant Gaze: Visual art and embodiment in a world of subjects" challenges anti-ocularism and considers how visual perception can contribute to relation-building between viewer and world. Carruthers's essay has been read and appreciated since 2006, but has yet to be collected by a journal, until now. The editors are glad to publish "Returning the Radiant Gaze" in *The Goose*. Joanne Leow's short story "the sea decides" depicts an island and its inhabitants who are shaped by the water that permeates bodies, land, and literary style alike. Jonathan Hope's speculative fiction "Fallow Futures: A Short Story" imagines near-future cohabitation and collaboration between humans and the kinds of grasses now commonly considered pests, weeds, or invasive species. The poetry section includes poems by Tanis MacDonald, Tim Youngs, Diana Woodcock, Liam Geary Baulch, Ariel Kroon, Fiona Tinwei Lam, Karli Woods, and gillian harding-russel. Several of the poems resonate with the "Wrack Zone" theme of the ALECC conference held at the University of Victoria this June.

*The Goose* remains committed to book reviews as a means of sustaining and enriching our disparate community of environmentally engaged writers and readers. Issue 17.1 includes over twenty book reviews of pertinent works of environmental writing. Our reviewers, many of them

regular contributors, take seriously the importance of book reviews, since, as poet Shane Neilson has said, “all our words should not be spent on ourselves.”

Our cover image for this issue is Jana Kutarna’s *The Heart is a Mussel*. Katarina’s photograph depicts mussel shells gathered together and held by a plant that reaches above a rocky ocean shore. In addition to the cool shades of blues and greys and the close up view of the mussel, the photograph excites us for the way it highlights intricate mussel-plant-wrack zone relations and helps us think about love in moments of death and decay.

As always, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of our contributors and to poetry editor Emily McGiffin, book reviews editor David Carruthers, *Directeur du contenu francophone* (French editor) Julien Defraeye, and copy editors David Anderson, Jenna Gersie, Joseph Maslen, and Nathan TeBokkel. Without the generosity of our community of excellent contributors and outstanding volunteer editors, an issue of this scale and richness would not be possible.

From Amanda, Melanie, and the rest of the editorial team: congratulations to Alec on the birth of baby Sophia this summer!

### ***The Goose* Issue 17.2 Call for Submissions: Art and Environmental Activism**

Issue 17.2 (spring 2019) of *The Goose* will be a special issue on the role of art in environmental activism. The call for submissions is available on our website at [scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/about.html](https://scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/about.html). The submission deadline is January 7, 2019. Issue 18.1 (fall 2019) will be an open issue. We accept submissions on an ongoing basis through our online publishing system at [scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/](https://scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/).

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**ALEC FOLLETT** is co-editor of *The Goose* and a PhD candidate in literary studies at the University of Guelph. His dissertation addresses contemporary environmental justice writing. Beyond the academy, Alec has conducted field research for environmental NGOs and has volunteered with Vocamus Writers Community, an organization that works to support Guelph's local literary culture.

**MELANIE DENNIS UNRAU** is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Manitoba and co-editor of *The Goose*. Her dissertation focuses on petropoetics—poetry written by humans about oil and the ways in which oil as poet has shaped our worlds, infrastructures, and cultures. Melanie is poetry editor of *Geez* magazine. She is a Sir Gordon Wu Scholar and a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholar.